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AUTHOR Hill, Don; Pope, Denise Clark
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ABSTRACT

Part 1 of this paper briefly describes the Service Learning 2000 partnership that joined Stanford University, K-12 schools, and community organizations in a collaborative effort to promote service learning throughout California. In part 2, the paper examines how the Service Learning 2000 Center has established a niche for service learning at the Stanford University School of Education during the past 3 years. It traces the development of specific goals for working with the university, the strategies used to pursue these goals, and the struggles encountered along the way. In the final section, the nature of the collaboration is discussed with an eye to answering the question: "Is fostering productive collaboration with the Stanford School of Education [in establishing service learning] worth the struggle?" The paper suggests that benefits are emerging, but the question is yet to be answered. (KC)

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Are School-University-Community Partnerships Worth the Struggle?
Service Learning: A Case Study

Establishing a Beachhead: Service Learning at Stanford

by Don Hill and Denise Clark Pope

Part one of this paper briefly describes the Service Learning 2000 partnership which joined Stanford University, K-12 schools, and community organizations in a collaborative effort to promote service learning throughout California. The story of the creation of the partnership is intended to provide a context for all three papers in the symposium. In part two of the paper, we examine how the Service Learning 2000 Center has developed a tenuous beachhead for service learning at the Stanford University School of Education over the past three years. We trace the development of specific goals for working with the University, the strategies we use to pursue these goals, and the struggles we encounter along the way. In the final section we examine the nature of the collaboration and seek to answer the question: "Is fostering productive collaboration with the Stanford School of Education worth the struggle?"

Service Learning 2000 Center
50 Embarcadero Road
Palo Alto, CA 94301

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Establishing a Beachhead: Service Learning at Stanford

Part I

Part one of this paper briefly describes the Service Learning 2000 partnership which joined Stanford University, K-12 schools, and community organizations in a collaborative effort to promote service learning throughout California. The story of the creation of the partnership is intended to provide a context for all three papers in the symposium.

Background

Service learning is a form of experiential education which integrates classroom learning with community service. Service learning curriculum engages students in service projects which address significant community needs while allowing students to test classroom theories and work cooperatively to solve real problems. In addition to improving the quality of the service provided, service learning seeks to promote self-esteem, higher order thinking skills, and authentic learning experiences -- all goals of curriculum reform efforts.

The Service Learning 2000 Center is a partnership located within the Stanford University School of Education designed to promote high quality service learning. Key to the achievement of high quality is meaningful integration of public service with classroom curriculum. Recognizing that this kind of service learning requires expanded school-community connections as well as new pedagogical skills and strategies, the Service Learning 2000 Center formed a partnership that includes the Volunteer Centers of California, the Constitutional Rights Foundation, the Haas

Center for Public Service, and the Stanford Educational Collaborative. Each of these partners brings unique perspectives and experiences to assist the Center mission of providing training, resources, and research support necessary to build quality service learning programs throughout California.

The Center traces its short history back to a 1992 Higher Education Service Learning Grant from the federal government which, in essence, funded a four district, eight day Service Learning 2000 summer institute for thirty-two teachers at the Stanford Haas Center for Public Service. This institute led, by word of mouth, to a contract with the California Department of Education to lead similar institutes for projects funded by their CalServe office. Evaluation of these institutes was extremely positive, resulting in a strong demand for professional development support for service learning practitioners across the state and a request from the California Department of Education for Service Learning 2000 to provide continued leadership. To meet these requests, Service Learning 2000 submitted a proposal to the Corporation for National Service in January, 1994 to expand capacity to offer training programs, resources, and research by creating a Service Learning 2000 Center at Stanford.

The Corporation for National Service recognized the high quality of Service Learning 2000 professional development by providing one of its larger grants to establish the proposed Center at Stanford. Since its inception, Service Learning 2000 has provided hands-on support to more than three thousand educators and community workers from all sections of California who are either initiating service learning programs or seeking assistance with practical problems of implementation and assessment.

Symposium Design

This AERA symposium begins with papers that offer three different lenses to look at the challenge of building quality service learning experiences for youth. Jill Addison-Jacobson and Joy Addison present a service learning lens located inside two middle schools; Mark Batenburg presents a service learning lens of agency leaders trying to work with schools and young people; and Denise Clark Pope and Don Hill present a service learning lens of bottom-up reformers inside the Stanford School of Education. Each of these papers resembles an autonomous mini-case study. Comments from Anna Waring, the discussant, and Larry Cuban, the symposium Chair, help the audience ferret out key issues for service learning partnerships that involve schools, communities, and universities. It is hoped that this symposium discussion will, in effect, connect the three papers to create a more general and coherent service learning case study to help answer the question: Are School-University-Community Partnerships Worth the Struggle?

Part II

In the following section, we examine how the Service Learning 2000 Center has developed a tenuous beachhead for service learning at the Stanford University School of Education over the past three years. We trace the development of specific goals for working with the University, the strategies we use to pursue these goals, and the struggles we encounter along the way as we attempt to collaborate with Stanford.

Who We Are

Describing the organizational context for this paper is both necessary and a little difficult. The authors, Denise Clark Pope and Don Hill, work at the Service Learning 2000 Center where Denise, a Stanford School of Education doctoral student, serves as Research Coordinator, and Don serves as the Center's Director.

The Service Learning 2000 Center is a project supported by the Stanford School of Education through the Stanford Educational Collaborative, which is an organization that connects the School of Education with teachers and administrators in the Bay Area. Professor Larry Cuban serves as Principal Investigator for both the Stanford Educational Collaborative and the Service Learning 2000 Center. The Center is located off campus at Palo Alto High School and is funded primarily from outside sources. At the present time, the Service Learning 2000 Center is the largest school and community outreach project in the Stanford Educational Collaborative, and is connected to the broader University through its partnership with the Haas Center for Public Service at Stanford. As a project within the Stanford School of Education, the Service Learning 2000 Center is a part of the University; in addition, the School

of Education is one of the Center's four partners. For this reason, the Center works collaboratively with the University while existing within it.

Our Modest Goals

Part of the mission of the Service Learning 2000 Center is to promote service learning within the Stanford University School of Education. Because we believe in the potential power of service learning to improve the quality of education at all levels, we understand the importance of establishing productive connections with the University. The service learning movement depends on support from higher education institutions in two important areas: research and teacher education. Without basic research on the strengths and weaknesses of service learning -- its value as a pedagogical strategy and as a catalyst for school reform, it is difficult to persuade policy makers and practitioners to implement service learning in schools throughout the nation. Similarly, without support from teacher training institutions to incorporate service learning into their credential programs, we see little hope for sustaining the reform.

Recognizing how collaboration with the University can help meet the needs of the service learning field, we also understand how the collaboration can fulfill certain needs within the Stanford University School of Education. One mission of the School is to "integrate practice and research so as to make education more productive and fulfilling for students and more just in its social consequences" (*Stanford University School of Education Information Bulletin*, 1992, p. 1). Another central goal, evident in the formation of the Stanford Educational Collaborative, is to foster community partnerships to improve educational quality. In addition, key faculty members at the School advocate educational philosophies which favor constructivist pedagogy and the ethic of caring in schools. We see the study and

practice of service learning within the Stanford School of Education as one strategy for achieving these goals.

Given these reciprocal needs, the Service Learning 2000 Center has developed four "modest" goals for incorporating service learning into the School of Education. We say "modest" because, unlike some leaders in the service learning field who hope to use the reform as a tool for effecting fundamental changes within institutions, our goals at Stanford are more limited and practical. To borrow a phrase from Larry Cuban (1988), we aim for "first-order" or incremental changes to take place within the University; we intend to leave the main organizational structures intact and hope to use service learning as a strategy to fulfill aspects of the School's existing mission as well as a tool for enhancing teaching and learning within its various departments.

Our initial goals for the School of Education are to:

1. Encourage most members of the School of Education community to recognize and understand the concept of service learning and the growing role it is playing in schools and universities across the nation.

2. Persuade faculty members whose research interests relate to the study of service learning to have knowledge of the practice and to use it in their courses. At the very least, these professors will inform their students about service learning as a pedagogical tool and a strategy for school reform, and in some cases, the professors will include a service learning experience in their course curriculum.

3. Support service learning research within the school, both by assisting graduate students who wish to study the practice and by promoting the value of this research.

4. Increase the role of service learning within the Stanford Teacher Education Program by teaching the practice of service learning in Curriculum and Instruction courses, by offering opportunities for student teachers to work with service learning mentor teachers, by encouraging the use of service learning experiences for pre-service teachers to better understand the communities in which they work, and by offering an elective course on service learning methodology.

Strategic Steps

When the Stanford Educational Collaborative agreed to house the Service Learning 2000 partnership as part of its Professional Development Center in 1992, Service Learning 2000 secured the Stanford School of Education as a fiscal agent and Professor Larry Cuban as the Principal Investigator for the project. Without this initial institutional support, the Service Learning 2000 partnership would not have been able to get off the ground. At the time of the decision, the Haas Center for Public Service at Stanford University, located only a few blocks from the School of Education, was actively promoting the use of service learning on campus as an effective pedagogical strategy. Though a few faculty members in the School of Humanities and Sciences were experimenting with service learning in their undergraduate classes, most faculty, staff, and students at the Stanford School of Education had never heard of the service learning reform or the National and Community Service Act of 1989, and remained largely uninformed and uninterested.

To garner support from faculty and students at the School of Education, the Service Learning 2000 Center devised a strategy to establish a beachhead for service learning. We hoped to break through the initial apparent resistance on the part of the faculty

to learn more about service learning by using all possible sources to promote awareness of the reform and to foster intellectual dialogue. At times, we saw ourselves as goodwill ambassadors for service learning as well as foot soldiers sent to infiltrate enemy lines.

To promote initial dialogue about service learning among faculty and students at the school, we hosted an informational luncheon. Invitations were sent to service learning teachers at the elementary and secondary level, Stanford professors in the School of Humanities and Sciences who were practicing service learning, and faculty members and graduate students at the School of Education whose research seemed most aligned with service learning. For example, we targeted Nel Noddings for her work on the ethic of care; faculty such as Ray McDermott, Eliot Eisner, and Lee Shulman for their interests in school culture and creating meaningful school experiences for children; and professors like Larry Cuban, Mike Kirst and Milbrey McLaughlin for their work on school reform efforts. The general strategy at the time was to stimulate discussion about service learning and to generate some interest in pursuing future activities. Also during this time, Service Learning 2000 staff gave presentations on service learning pedagogy to a few classes in the Stanford Teacher Education Program and continued to pursue formal and informal conversations with School of Education faculty and staff. More recent attempts for promoting dialogue include hosting two School of Education community forums on service learning which attracted over thirty-five participants, and initiating a conversation with the School of Education Deans.

In the last two years, Service Learning 2000 has continued to generate support and interest for service learning at the School of Education by improving its marketing and public relations efforts. The Center has strengthened its advertising strategies

for events and workshops on campus and sends monthly newsletters and recent Center publications to specific faculty members and School of Education administrators. The Service Learning 2000 staff also continues to invite University faculty members and leaders to speak at conferences and workshops, including Larry Cuban, Nel Noddings, Tim Stanton, and Beverly Carter, and offers scholarships and reduced prices for graduate students to attend.

Finally, the Center staff consciously seeks ways to connect faculty and graduate student research interests to the service learning movement. The Center provides funds for four part-time positions for Stanford graduate students and undergraduates interested in service learning research and program evaluation, and encourages these students to drum up support among their peers. In addition, staff members constantly strive to use the insights and current research findings of Stanford faculty in most Center programs and publications, and attempt to show the education professors the natural connection between their work and service learning pedagogy. One staff member at the Service Learning 2000 Center, a current Stanford graduate student, explains:

> Every chance I get, I try to mention service learning. I talk about it in my classes, I write papers about it for professors, and I try to explain how it absolutely relates to constructivist theory, moral education, and recent literature on establishing university-community partnerships. I am surprised by how well it fits with the goals of current reform efforts, and yet how few people have even heard of it.

Though this attempt to create awareness and goodwill for service learning at the Stanford School of Education has been difficult, and still many students and faculty members admit that they have "never heard of service learning," every now and

then, we manage to gain an ally or see a glimpse of hope. A few professors are becoming familiar with the language of the reform and refer to service learning pedagogy in some of their courses. Several faculty members have indicated interest in learning more about service learning and call upon the graduate student assistants and the Service Learning 2000 Center staff as resources for further information. In addition, more students opt to write papers and conduct studies on service learning for education courses, and more graduate students take advantage of reduced fees in order to participate in Center workshops and conferences. Finally, a critical mass of approximately twenty graduate students in the School of Education has come together through the service learning forums to offer support for those pursuing research towards doctoral dissertations on service learning.

The Ironies of the Struggle

As we reflect upon these successes and prepare for future collaborative efforts, we can't help but notice some of the ironies of our struggle to build support for service learning at Stanford.

As mentioned above, over the past three years, the Service Learning 2000 partnership has grown exponentially. Through workshops, conferences, summer institutes and consultations, the Center has offered curriculum development services, teacher training and technical assistance to schools, districts, teachers and community agencies throughout California. Both the California Department of Education and the Corporation for National Service continue to recognize the Service Learning 2000 Center for its outstanding professional development programs and have requested that the Center provide comprehensive training to CalServe recipients and service learning practitioners throughout the state. In addition, Center staff members have been invited to present papers and serve on

panels at several state and national education conferences including annual meetings of the American Educational Research Association (AERA), the National Society for Experiential Education (NSEE), and the National Association for Colleges of Teacher Education (NACTE). Don Hill and Jill Addison-Jacobson (Program Director for the Center) both serve as mentors with NSEE, and Jill currently serves as a member of their Board. Also, Don and Denise Clark Pope recently finished writing a chapter on high school service learning programs for publication in one of the first service learning textbooks for pre-service teachers. In short, this state and federal recognition of Service Learning 2000 as a national leader in the field has led to the belief that Stanford University School of Education is one of the nation's leading contributors to service learning education and research. The irony of the situation is that, as shown above, very few faculty and staff at the School of Education have an interest in service learning pedagogy and research. At the present time, no one on the faculty is pursuing research on service learning, nor do any professors use service learning as a pedagogical strategy in their courses.

Given this lack of interest in conducting research on service learning or teaching about it in education courses, we also find it ironic that some School of Education professors are recognized as pivotal contributors to the service learning movement. For example, service learning researchers and practitioners often refer to Nel Noddings' work on creating caring school communities, and Milbrey McLaughlin and Shirley Brice Heath's research on urban youth and community based organizations in an attempt to explain and validate the role of service learning in schools (See for example Albert 1994; Kendall 1990; Neal 1994; as well as various workshop materials from the Service Learning 2000 Center). Though these Stanford professors all publicly support the idea of service learning, they have indicated some reservations about the practice of service learning, and have shown no significant

interest in including service learning in their research and teaching agendas. We do not mention this point in order to criticize these professors; on the contrary, we often agree with their reservations about the practice of service learning. However, we do find it rather unfortunate that some of the "key thinkers" in the field do not associate themselves with the field -- especially because we believe they have much to offer.

Part III: Is it worth the struggle?

In this final section we seek to answer the question: "Is fostering productive collaboration with the Stanford School of Education worth the struggle?" To answer this question we examine the nature of the collaboration, including how each partner benefits, and we conclude with some recommendations for future efforts at collaboration.

Examining the Nature of the Collaboration

Sirotnik and Goodlad (1988) write that effective collaboration occurs when equal partners work together to meet self-interests while solving common problems. An analysis of the collaborative nature between Service Learning 2000 and the Stanford School of Education reveals that presently the partners do work together to meet self-interests; however, they have barely tapped the potential for the collaborative partnership to help solve common problems.

For example, the Service Learning 2000 Center relies on valuable resources within the School of Education: The Center relies on institutional support from the University as its fiscal agent and benefits greatly from the use of University staff for help with administrative tasks such as fundraising, human resources management,

and grant supervision. Without this support, the Center would literally not exist. The Center also relies on guidance from the Principal Investigator for the project, Larry Cuban, who provides constant wisdom and support to Center staff members. Though service learning is not central to Dr. Cuban's research agenda, his research on the history of school reform and his extensive past experience as a teacher and school superintendent make him an invaluable resource to the Center. As mentioned above, Service Learning 2000 staff members also call on other faculty in the School of Education for guidance and for assistance at Center conferences and workshops. In addition, we believe the Stanford name and reputation helps establish credibility for the Service Learning 2000 Center and probably enhances program attendance and fundraising efforts.

Being on the periphery of the School of Education, both figuratively -- as we are removed from its primary research agenda, and literally -- as we are located across the street, also has a few advantages. The Service Learning 2000 Center has considerable freedom to respond to specific requests from educators in the field and can pursue research and evaluation efforts which seem most valuable to the practitioners we work with, rather than complying to the research interests of a particular faculty member. This "loose coupling" of the Center with the University also empowers Center staff members, all of whom are former teachers and community leaders, to draw upon their practical experience and their knowledge of academic research to lead the professional development programs. This seems crucial for success when working with practitioners who often doubt the value of university research and are skeptical of how well professors understand the reality of the school environments and the teachers' work conditions.

In turn, the School of Education benefits in many ways from the Service Learning 2000 Center. As we noted earlier, the School of Education benefits from the Center's reputation for providing exemplary professional development programs and fostering effective school-community relations. The Center helps fulfill the School of Education mission in several ways, especially in terms of integrating research and practice. In addition, the Center employs Stanford School of Education graduate students as research assistants and provides them with tuition credit as well as valuable experience and leadership opportunities not usually available in large research projects on campus. The graduate students who work at the Center often design their own research projects (with guidance from Center staff), collect and analyze data, write grant proposals and research reports, attend educational conferences, and lead workshops and professional development programs. They also assist graduate student colleagues who are doing research on service learning for School of Education courses. The growing graduate student interest in service learning on campus and the positive experiences of the graduate assistants working at the Center has spurred discussion of adding another part-time research position at the Center next year.

One unintended merit of this collaborative venture is that, in the struggle to establish a working partnership, both partners constantly challenge one another to reflect on their beliefs and practices. When faculty members at the School of Education raise concerns about service learning, they push us to think critically about the mission of the reform. For instance, a few professors express reservations about the quality of the service experiences and the apparent emphasis on the benefits to the servers. They worry about a lack of reciprocity between youth volunteers and community members. This kind of constructive criticism is extremely valuable as it helps us to reflect on ways to improve service learning

practice. Similarly, we hope that our presence at the School of Education encourages faculty and graduate students to reflect on their own educational philosophies and to examine effective ways to integrate theory and practice. We hope to challenge them to consider the value of service learning and other reforms like it to improve teaching and learning at all grade levels.

Future Possibilities

Though it seems clear that both partners benefit from the collaborative venture, it also seems that neither party is using the collaboration to its full potential. By pursuing our initial "modest" goals, we hope to establish credibility for service learning at the School of Education and to garner enough support to pursue greater goals designed to fulfill the missions of both organizations.

Both the Service Learning 2000 Center and the Stanford University School of Education have an interest in improving the quality of teaching at the University and in fostering connections between schools and communities. To help achieve these goals, an elective course on service learning methodology has been proposed for students in the Stanford Teacher Education Program for the 1995-96 school year. The course, which has been tentatively approved by the Directors of the Teacher Education Program, will be taught by the Service Learning 2000 staff and by Tim Stanton, Director of the Haas Center for Public Service. Though the syllabus has not been developed yet, the course will introduce pre-service teachers to service learning as a pedagogical tool and as a strategy for school reform. Students will most likely engage in community service activities in order to model the theories and practices learned in the course as well as to help the pre-service teachers better understand the needs of their future students. The proposed course serves to join

the resources of the Haas Center, Service Learning 2000, and the School of Education in a productive effort to meet common goals.

This "university team effort" has been tried once before with great success through the Service Learning 2000 Center workshop on Community Service Writing. Faculty from the Stanford English Department worked with Center staff, a School of Education graduate student and a high school English teacher to lead a three-part workshop on using service to improve student writing skills. Both present and former Stanford Teacher Education students attended the workshop along with several English teachers from local high schools and community colleges, and every participant rated the overall program a "five" on a scale from one to five. Spurred on by the success of these university-wide collaborations, Service Learning 2000 hopes to initiate similar projects in the future.

In addition, we see future possibilities for success in areas of collaboration that have yet to be explored. The Service Learning 2000 Center has strong relationships with teachers and administrators in school districts as well as good connections to community agencies. The University can take advantage of these resources, both for use as research sources and sites, and for increasing knowledge of educational issues by working with practitioners and community members on common projects. The more the university faculty and graduate students get out into the field and work with practitioners, the more likely they will be able to break down the barriers of mistrust and the skepticism over the role of research to improve practice.

The Service Learning 2000 Center would also benefit from stronger connections with Stanford faculty in the areas of research and evaluation techniques. Though recent research efforts by the Center have been well received in the service learning

field, guidance and advice from university professors would improve the quality of Center research and enhance dissemination efforts. In turn, the Center has learned much over the last three years about professional development and may serve as an important resource for the University in this rather undeveloped area of study in the School of Education.

The ideas above represent only a few of the many future possibilities for effective collaboration with the University. As the Service Learning 2000 Center slowly gains legitimacy and attracts allies, the potential for fruitful collaboration continues to increase.

Conclusion: Is it worth the struggle?

As we look back over the three years of the partnership between Stanford University and Service Learning 2000, we reach two different answers to the question, "Is it worth the struggle?"

One answer is that the struggle may be justified by the three thousand practitioners who have benefited from our services, and by the many students who have discovered the power of service learning. We would not exist without support from the Stanford School of Education, and as long as the partnership enables us to provide quality professional development, resources and research on service learning throughout California, we feel it may be worth the struggle.

On the other hand, we feel unable to provide a definite answer to the question. Though we have seen some glimpses of hope at the School of Education and have made some progress toward achieving our goals, we are far from fulfilling our mission of effective collaboration. The success of the service learning reform

depends upon important support from higher education institutions like Stanford. To determine the value of the struggle toward productive school-university-community collaboration, we must wait to see how our partnership develops in the future. At the present time, the best answer we can give to the question, "Is it worth the struggle?" is "Only time can tell."

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